

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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67

ACTION MMO-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 FAA-00 DOTE-00 SS-15 SP-02

PER-01 ABF-01 NSC-05 OMB-01 EB-07 /057 W

----- 099229

R 141600Z OC 75

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 871

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 7892

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR AFSP

SUBJ: RELOCATION FAA REGIONAL OFFICE IN BEIRUT

REF STATE 242686

1. WHILE AE WOULD LIKE TO SEE ATHENS RECEIVE THE BENEFITS ACCRUING FROM RELOCATION OF BEIRUT PERSONNEL WITH REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES, AND BELIEVE THAT GOG IS ITSELF AWARE OF POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES IN DEVELOPING ATHENS AS A CENTER FOR SUCH ACTIVITIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE COMMERCIAL SPHERE, WE HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE FEASIBILITY OF MOVING THE FAA REGIONAL OFFICER AND HIS STAFF HERE AT THE PRESENT TIME.

2. AS DEPARTMENT KNOWS, AIR SPACE PROBLEMS ARE A PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE ASPECT OF GREEK-TURKISH DIFFERENCES IN THE AEGEAN. IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF RUMOR AND SUSPICION THAT STILL SURROUNDS U.S. ACTIVITIES IN GREECE, WE CONSIDER IT LIKELY THAT FAA RELOCATION WOULD LEAD TO INFLAMMATORY AND MISLEADING STORIES IN THE GREEK PRESS AS WELL AS QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT SEEKING TO LINK THE FAA MOVE WITH THE AEGEAN AIR SPACE ISSUE. THIS POSSIBILITY WOULD CERTAINLY BE IN THE MIND OF THE GOG WERE WE TO RAISE THE QUESTION AND MIGHT LEAD THEM TO TURN DOWN OUR REQUEST. IN VIEW OF GOG'S EXTREMELY FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE IN AGREEING TO CONFIDENTIAL

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LET ATHENS SERVE AS SAFEHAVEN IN EVENT OF GENERAL
EVACUATION OF AMERICANS FROM BEIRUT, WE WOULD PREFER
NOT REPEAT NOT TO PRESS THEM ON FAA AT THIS TIME.

3. IF, DESPITE THESE CONSIDERATIONS, DEPARTMENT WISHES
US TO RAISE SUBJECT WITH GREEK GOVERNMENT, WE WOULD
PROPOSE TO DO SO INFORMALLY AT MFA. WE BELIEVE HOWEVER
THAT IF OTHER POSSIBLE SITES FOR FAA RELOCATION EXIST,
THESE ALTERNATIVES SHOULD BE EXPLORED BEFORE WE APPROACH
THE GREEKS. STEARNS

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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06 JUL 2006

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